



THE MADONNA AND CHILD.



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Miscellanea.

CERTAIN British newspapers have lately been showing a quite pathetic concern for the "honour" of Ireland. They are haunted day and night by the hideous dread that "an indelible stigma" might tarnish the fair fame of the beloved Irish nation. Long articles stream like tears down their faces daily at the insistence of the intolerable thought. And hoary old gentlemen forget their gout to mingle their tears in equally long letters with the lachrymose outpourings of these Pecksniffian Jeremiahs. There is but one way, it seems, to stay this bitter weeping and to avert eternal disgrace from the hitherto stainless name of Erin, and a weak Government is bullied and begged to apply the Military Service Act to "the

fighting race" to force it to fight in the "noblest of causes." Then only will Ireland be elevated to the proud level of England, who has found it necessary to compel her own brave sons to take up arms in her interests! Timed to a nicety with the mischievous cant of these junker journals has been the appearance of a very plague of articles throughout the subsidised press in praise of the recent exploits of the Irish regiments in France. One would think that Irish valour was some new and as yet undiscovered thing, so much stress has been laid on its latest evidences. The whole picturesque vocabulary of the descriptive journalist has been ransacked from end to end for phrases to glorify the "dash" and "daring" and incredible heroism of the Irish troops. Such unusual enthusiasm is somewhat suspicious, and taken with the newspaper campaign just alluded to seems intended as a gilding for the pill of Conscription. For who would not be proud to emulate such deeds of dashing gallantry?

* * * * *

Perhaps it was too much to hope that the lesson of the revolutionary outbreak of last Easter would not be so soon forgotten in England. One of the things which undoubtedly hurried forward that outbreak was the belief that Conscription was imminent.

* * * * *

On this subject we cannot do better than quote from a leading article which appeared in *The Universe*, a London Catholic newspaper, a few weeks ago. We commend its words to Irish fathers and mothers especially. "While our soldiers are fighting in the cause of liberty and justice—sacrificing their lives in order that the next generation may enjoy the blessings of peace—it may seem both ungenerous and inopportune to point out that the home-coming of these brave men will bring in its train a grave danger to the health of the present generation and of generations yet unborn. The bullets and shells of the enemy may wound and maim, may wreck the constitutions of the victims, but the latter are alone the sufferers. But the dread disease which lurks behind the firing line and waits for the thoughtless and the reckless in the moments of release from the stress and danger of the trenches, can be transmitted to innocent women at home, and through them to the generation that is to be. It is a loathsome subject to touch, but the problem it raises is so grave that it is the duty of a religious paper to sound the alarm, not merely for the sake of the men, but even more for the sake of those who may be their victims.

"A grave problem has arisen which must be dealt with promptly and practically. Provision of facilities for the free and adequate treatment of all sufferers will doubtless result in a reduction of the incidence of the disease. But it will not stamp it out." We need not deal with the safeguards for the coming generation which the writer proceeds to suggest: and

any comments on the facts themselves, coming from such a serious source as they do, would be superfluous.

Many articles and letters have recently appeared* in the Dublin newspapers deplored the growing indecency of the Dublin stage and calling for a remedy. The first reflection which this discussion provokes is that it derived its origin and inspiration from letters to the London press on the indecencies of the London stage written by a British general who was concerned for the morals of British soldiers. It is curious that the pastoral letters and other pronouncements of Irish bishops who have been for years directing the attention of the press and the people of Ireland to the same form of immoral propaganda have been to a large extent ignored. Curious, too, that the Irish Vigilance Association, which has been long working against tremendous odds to clear Ireland from a foul press and a foul stage, has been practically boycotted by the press and left without support by the people. But a real live general is a different matter, and his word is hailed like the word of a demi-god. The Church of the country is ignored, and the agencies through which it works scouted. It is a strange commentary on our present Anglicised mentality. Doubtless the correspondents who wrote to the newspapers on this matter were sincere—even when they asked what the Vigilance Association was doing! But the newspapers themselves? Will it be credited that in the very issues of the newspapers in which the correspondence appeared and which supported the indignant protests in special articles, two of the filthiest plays which have yet been staged in Dublin were advertised? Will it be credited that they were not only advertised, but praised and panegyrized by the critics of the newspaper staffs? The very man who initiated the correspondence by a slashing article on stage immorality in one newspaper, wrote with a sort of chastened enthusiasm the following week on the beauties of "A Little Bit of Fluff"—praising it with faint damnis, so to speak! certainly not damning it with faint praise. But these are days of fine careless hypocrisy. Catholics who have any sincerity left know very well where the remedy lies for the evils complained of: they will not be cured by writing to the newspapers.

An Sagart.

HE was a very young priest—very young indeed: in fact he was only about ten years of age! His vestments, too, were somewhat unecclesiastical. A long, white night-dress, taken from his mother's room, and held in at the waist by a piece of twine, constituted the alb: while his own little shirt hanging from the shoulders, with the arms crossed in front, to represent the stole, did duty for the chasuble.

The acolyte who served this youthful levite was a chubby little laddie only a year or so younger—the priest's own brother indeed. His duties consisted in ringing a tiny bell and moving a large book from side to side of the bedroom altar. This small Mass-server, whose big eyes seemed always ready to brim over, had a perfect passion for ringing the bell, very often at the wrong time. But his brother was the sweetest-tempered *sagart* imaginable, and never an angry word fell from his lips. Not even when the congregation of two small maidens started quarrelling and shrieks of defiance filled the air, would he lose his rare composure of manner. Sometimes the sobs of the little altar-boy would swell the woeful chorus, and then the poor *sagart*, in great dismay, would endeavour to make peace. Yet, despite the fantastic garments, and the absurd conduct of the congregation, the whole performance (including a sermon) was the quintessence of dignity. For the little priest's gestures were reverent: his voice, low and earnest: his childish face innocent and good: his grave, shy eyes, alight with feeling.

I can see, as in a glass, this gentle boy-priest in many different phases of his life. As a small boy, serene-eyed and happy-hearted—though always rather quiet—hurrying to school, the “Little Brother of his Heart” trotting beside him, for the two were never apart. They clung together in life—and so they died together.

I can see him an earnest student toiling unceasingly in preparation for examinations, and winning right through. I can see him in his young manhood, a little less dreamy and more alert than when a boy, but still with his broad white brows bent over his books: still climbing the ladder which leads to fame. I can see him, late one memorable night, rushing home straight into his mother's arms, his strong face aglow with exultant pride, to tell her *first* of his earliest success. And his pride was not for himself, but for her! His triumphs were for his mother, just as his last, faithful thought and loving message were for her—alone!

But although all these visions are as clear to me as is the shining of crystals in dark places, there is one more vivid, more brilliant, than all the rest. The vision of the little, innocent *sagart*, standing before the homely altar in the sunny room of the old house in Brunswick-street. I can see his little outstretched hands, and earnest, boyish face. I can even hear his young voice whispering reverently—“*Ite, missa est.*”

MARY BRIGID PEARSE.

Mark Donelon's Revenge.

MARK DONELON lighted a cigar and sauntered leisurely along the suburban road, content in the thought that, his business in the city being finished, he would be free to return home the following day. His reflections were pleasant ones. Mark was a rising young solicitor, and the law proceedings which he had come up to the city to attend had turned out satisfactorily for his client. That was one reason why he puffed away at his cigar with quiet content. The other lay in the hope of meeting on the following evening his twin brother Kevin. The pair were devotedly attached, and meant to travel together in a few weeks time to the old home in Kerry where both had first seen the light.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon. Already dusk was falling, and there was a sting of sleet in the December blast that swept along the deserted road. No tram was in sight, and after a useless wait of five minutes the young man turned up his coat collar and set out at a brisk pace in the direction of his hotel.

Suddenly a shrill cry rang out on the evening air and he stopped short with a jerk. Then, as an agonising “Help!” came to his ears, he ran forward and, round the curve of the road, saw a burly-looking man towering above a shabbily-dressed woman whose arm he held as in a vice. Before the stranger realised that a third party had appeared on the scene he found himself seized by the back of the neck and spun round and round until it seemed to his astonished eyes that the sky above and the earth below had suddenly changed places.

“You coward!” said Mark between his teeth. “How dare you assault a woman?”

With a hiss of rage the man turned and flung himself upon him with all his force. Strong as he was, Mark was almost taken off his feet, but he recovered himself quickly, and by a tremendous effort succeeded in flinging his opponent from him. By this time a little crowd had gathered, as crowds will, and a shrill whistle close at hand caused Mark's late antagonist to give a second glance up the street before retreating hastily in the opposite direction. His flight was unavailing; a few minutes later he reappeared between two policemen, his face dark with passion, his black eyes balefully fixed on Mark Donelon.

“Some day I'll be even with you for this,” he hissed as he passed by, and the look of hatred that accompanied the words drew a little cry of terror from the woman he had tried to rob.

Mark turned to her. “You have nothing to fear from him now,” he said. “Why did he attack you?”

She opened her hand and displayed a few silver coins that lay on the roughened palm.

"'Tis my week's earnings, sir," she said. "He saw them in my hand when I passed him, and followed me. May God and His holy Mother bless you, sir. I'll never forget to pray for you till my dying day."

"Thank you," said Mark humbly. He knew how precious in the sight of God were the prayers of that honest Irish heart. "I am glad I was in time. This will add a little to your store," and he dropped a crown into her palm with the others. Then, followed by her blessings, he hurried away.

At the top of the street he slackened his pace. People stood in little knots about the pavement looking after the retreating figure of the prisoner and his captors. Just at the corner two ladies, one a youthful replica of the other, stood gazing with the others, their faces strangely white. As Mark passed, the elder woman stepped forward and accosted him.

"Can you tell me what has happened?" she said, as well as she could speak from agitation. "What has the prisoner done?"

"He assaulted and tried to rob a defenceless woman," said Mark.

"God help us," she answered, more to herself than to him. Then, mindful of courtesy, she added "Thank you," and as she lifted her eyes he saw that they held tears.

Mark raised his hat and passed on. Alighting from the tram at the door of his hotel, his eye fell on a tall figure in clerical garb standing on the pavement. As the figure came towards him, smiling, he strode forward with an exclamation of incredulous delight.

"Kevin!" he said, as they gripped hands.

"Myself," said his brother. "I arrived at your digs last evening, and your clerk told me you had gone to town, so I thought I'd run up and give you a surprise. We can be home together to-morrow. How did your case go? You wrote to me about it, you know."

"Splendidly. My man won," said Mark tersely.

Kevin laughed.

"That's all right, for you at all events," he said. "You'll soon be a famous man. I'm nearing the end, too. Only six months more, and then—"

His face had grown suddenly serious, but his eyes glowed.

"A priest for ever," said Mark under his breath.

"Yes. Isn't it an awful thought, and a glorious one? Sometimes I feel almost afraid. But there, shut the door and let's talk of home. I had a letter from mother yesterday just before I left. And, do you know, Mark, when I was sitting in the train at Maynooth yesterday with my hat off, Dick Liston—you remember Dick—came up to me all smiles, certain I was you."

"No! Am I so like you, then?"

"Like? Why, we are like as two peas; everyone says so."

And so they talked on and on, while the shadows deepened, and the lights outside grew brighter as the daylight waned, and the stars, like pin-pricks in the great blue dome overhead,

came forth and smiled down on the earth, their cousin, as she circled onward and onward, bearing her living freight through the boundless regions of infinity.

One sunny morning—it chanced to be the First Friday—of the following July, Father Kevin Donelon rode slowly up the principal street of Cloone, the provincial town where Mark had his office. Farther out, where the town ends and the country begins, was Mark's home, a pretty two-storied villa standing in its own grounds in the shelter of copper beeches. Here the young priest dismounted and gave the mare in charge to Mark's "handy man," who performed in turn the duties of groom, gardener, coachman and general factotum. Returning to the office he found his brother bent with brows knit over a lengthy typewritten document.

"Busy?" he asked cheerfully.

"Not very," said Mark. "I suppose you had breakfast with Father Cary?"

"Yes. He wants me back for dinner at four, and would wish you to come over with me."

"I can't," said Mark. "I'm genuinely sorry, but I'm riding in to Boherbawn this afternoon, as I've got an appointment for 3.30."

"That's a misfortune. Well, it can't be helped. I'll be with you as far as the presbytery. I'm going to take Bran out for a run now, and shall be back at two."

They left the town together on horseback a few hours later. On the outskirts they met a small pony trap crowded with children, whose bright, laughing faces contrasted painfully with that of the pale, dark-robed girl in front who held the reins. They hailed Mark Donelon merrily as he passed, and the young man smilingly raised his hat in answer. He was a prime favourite with the little Donovans.

"That's the new governess, I suppose," he said half to himself. "Her face seems familiar, somehow. Where on earth did I see her before? By Jove! yes—I remember."

He thought of the evening in Dublin some six months previously when Kevin had paid him that surprise visit in town. His brother wondered why he was so silent for the rest of the way and chaffed him on his reticence, but Mark for once kept his reflections to himself.

At the gates of the presbytery they separated. A little farther on Mark came upon a shabbily-dressed man seated on the trunk of a fallen tree by the roadside. He looked up, and they recognised each other instantly. Mark Donelon saw in this ragged individual the stranger he had found trying to assault the woman on the outskirts of Dublin city months before, and the remembrance of the man's threat of vengeance came back to him with rather unpleasant distinctness. That the tramp recognised him was but too evident from the gleam of hatred that sprang to his eyes as he leaped suddenly to his feet.

In silence Mark passed on. The tramp's hand travelled swiftly to his breast-pocket, but at that moment a labourer's cart rounded the turn of the road, and his hand fell to his side, empty.

John Wells, who even previous to his latest offence had long been "wanted" by the police authorities, had just completed a sentence of six months' imprisonment. During his confinement he maintained a sullen reserve which not all the most persuasive efforts of the kindly chaplain could break through. The prisoner's only feeling was one of bitterest hatred against Mark Donelon, and his only desire, to be revenged on the man who had been, as he deemed him, the cause of his capture. He thought of revenge by day, he dreamt of it by night, until the word seemed to burn itself into his very brain, and the thirst for vengeance to be stamped on a face that had been handsome once, but which crime and dissipation had robbed of every trace of refinement.

He stood by the roadside watching the figure of Mark Donelon until it disappeared; then when the cart had passed he drew out a small revolver and ran his fingers cautiously along the muzzle.

"He's likely to come back this way," he muttered as he replaced the deadly little weapon. "Strange that my search for *her* should lead me to him."

He walked leisurely along the road for about half-a-mile till he came to the entrance of a copse beside a cross-roads. "He might chance to turn here," he said under his breath, and, entering the wood, lay down on the moist moss and waited.

The hours dragged past. Feeling the pangs of hunger, he drew a chunk of dry bread from his pocket and munched it with slow deliberation. Another hour passed, and another, and another, and still he waited on. Once a rabbit scurried past him into the brushwood and he started up, frightened. Then the dusk began to drop down slowly like grey smoke, and the leaves about him ceased to whisper, but drooped downwards, beaded with dew. He got up, shook the moisture from his garments, stretched his cramped limbs, and stepped out on to the road. At that moment the clic-cloc of a horse's hoofs came to his ears out of the fog.

He shrank back into the shelter of the hedge and waited. A minute passed; then the figures of horse and man loomed up beside him in the mist. He ran forward, struck a match, and in the yellow flame saw the face that had haunted his dreams for half a year. The next moment a shot rang out on the still night air, and was followed in quick succession by a cry of agony, the thud of a falling body, and the wild beating of a horse's hoofs as the animal galloped riderless towards the town. In that instant, remorse, strong and terrible, swooped down on the murderer's soul and turned him cold with horror. The next moment he, too, was fleeing along the road, his hands pressed against his ears to drown the cry of his victim, which still re-echoed through his brain.

Mark Donelon was delayed in Boherbawn longer than he had anticipated, and dusk had fallen when he started for home. He rode swiftly, and had come within half a mile of Cloone when his mare shied violently, almost flinging him from the saddle. Seeing a dark object lying in the grieve he descended and struck a light. As he did so, a piteous cry broke from his lips. The figure was that of his own brother.

Tenderly he stooped and picked up the young priest's unconscious form, whose face was not whiter than his own, and, staggering under the weight of his burden, at length reached home. The doctor, who was summoned instantly, pronounced the wound to be serious, but not necessarily fatal. The bullet had passed out about three inches above the heart.

Sitting by his brother's bedside in the grey morning dawn, Mark tried slowly to collect his thoughts. He guessed quite well that the shot had been meant for him, as he thought of the tramp he had passed early on the previous day and the look of vindictive hatred cast upon himself. Then, raising his eyes, he saw hanging over the bed a piece of plain white parchment framed in ebony. Printed upon it in strong black Roman letters were the words: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

He slipped on to his knees, and with a choking sob buried his face in his hands.

"My God, help me to forgive," he moaned. "And, oh! if it please Thee, spare this precious life."

About five o'clock he went softly downstairs and passed out into the open for a breath of pure air. Standing by the gate, he was attracted by the sound of hasty footsteps coming towards him down the road. A minute afterwards a dishevelled-looking figure came into view. The man did not seem to know whither his steps were leading him, and his eyes glittered wildly. At sight of Mark Donelon he stopped short with a shriek. It was John Wells.

"You!" he cried. "Away, away! Do not torture me. There is blood on your face and head, as it is on my hands. Hideous phantom, away!"

Mark Donelon went over and caught him by the arm.

"What have you done?" he said, unconscious that the flesh under his grasp quivered with pain. "You murderer! You have had your revenge, a thousand times more bitter than if you had robbed me of life, for you have robbed me perhaps of one who is dearer to me than life. You have stained your hands with the blood of a priest, my brother."

His eyes burned like fires in a face that was grey with passionate pain. A broken cry, like an infant's, broke from his companion.

"A priest!" he said. "A priest! Oh, my God!"

Then a trembling seized him from head to foot and he held his hands out helplessly, like a child.

"I am here," he said. "Take me, hang me, kill me, torture me. I cannot suffer worse than I am suffering. A priest! Oh, my God!"

He seemed to be overwhelmed with remorse. It was as though it had swallowed up the brutish fierceness of the man and left him quivering and helpless at the feet of his intended victim.

A little of the fire died out of Mark's eyes.

"I will not kill you," he said. "You may go. And—I—I forgive you as I hope to be—forgiven."

The words almost choked him, but he forced his dry tongue to utter them. Then, his strong frame shaken with sobs, he turned and walked slowly back to the house.

Father Kevin Donelon did not die. Weeks and months passed by, bringing him consciousness, recovery and strength in their turn. Mark could scarcely speak in the intensity of his happiness. His mother, when she heard of her son's accident, came up from Kerry and nursed the young priest back to health.

Mark left them together, nurse and patient, sitting on the little verandah one afternoon when legal business took him to Boherbawn. As he returned the evening was closing in, bringing with it remembrance of that other evening of which he never thought without a shudder. This time, however, he was driving. At the entrance to the town of Cloone the mare suddenly took fright and bolted. It was market day, and late as it was, vehicles of all shapes and sizes filled the streets. Mark saw his danger and his face slightly blanched. Suddenly a figure crossed in front of the flying mare, flung himself on her head, and brought the frightened animal to a standstill.

It was a daring deed, and a fatal one. When the mare had stopped, Mark looked down and saw his rescuer lying with closed eyes under her hoofs. Simultaneously a little cry broke from him. The man was John Wells. After months of wandering, Fate, or rather Providence, had led him again to Cloone, to be the instrument of saving a life which he had previously sought to take away.

Mark had him taken to his own home, where after a time he regained consciousness, to find Father Kevin Donelon standing at his head. Then Mark went out, leaving priest and patient alone.

Of late the young man had been a frequent visitor at the home of his old friend Harry Donovan, who had married and settled down on the outskirts of Cloone. But though he enjoyed the society of his host and hostess, and was particularly fond of the children, he was forced to confess to himself that the chief attraction for him lay in the fair face of Mary Delamere, the children's governess—the face he had never forgotten since he had caught a fleeting glimpse of it that evening in the city. It was therefore with a little thrill of gladness that, as he descended the stairs after leaving the sick-room, he saw her standing on the steps of the front door.

"Miss Delamere!" he said, his pleasure showing itself in his face. "Come in. There is nothing wrong, I hope?" he added, seeing she was unusually agitated.

"There has been an accident, I believe," said the girl quickly. "I heard that a man named John Wells has been injured. Is he badly hurt?"

"I am afraid he has not very long to live," said Mark gravely. "The poor fellow risked his life to save mine."

The girl's pale face went paler. "I should like to see him," she said. "He was my mother's step-brother."

"What!" The exclamation broke from Mark involuntarily.

"Yes; I shall tell you about it some other time, but now—may I see him?"

"I think he is making his confession," said Mark. "My brother is with him at present."

"His confession? Thank God! You know," she said, with a sad smile, "he did not live a model life. His conduct broke my mother's heart. He was always shadowing us, begging for money, and we were by no means rich. When father died—he was a doctor—we were almost penniless. Then one evening we saw him being taken off to prison. I remember," she said, her colour slightly deepening, "it was the evening we saw you first. Poor mother spoke to you as you passed. She never saw you afterwards. Within six weeks from that time she was dead.

"When her step-brother came out of prison he traced me here. He got a little money from me, after which he disappeared, and I did not hear of him again until this evening. It was a dreadful accident. You might have been killed too, but for God's mercy."

"Under God, I owe my life to him," said Mark. "But he— Come in, mother. This is Miss Delamere. Is the patient asking for me? Well, you might take Miss Delamere in to see him first. He is a connection of hers."

When Mrs. Donelon returned a few minutes later she found Mark standing by the window. He turned quickly as she entered.

"What do you think of Miss Delamere?" he said.

"She is a charming girl," said his mother. "But how came she to be connected with—"

"Never mind; I'll tell you that afterwards. But do you really like her?"

"No one could help loving her," said his mother.

"That's what I think too," said Mark. "I'm glad you agree with me."

"Oh! I understand," said his mother. "So that's how it is?"

"That's how it is, mother mine," he said, as they looked into each other's eyes with a smile.

A few days later the mortal remains of John Wells were laid to rest in the quiet "God's acre." On the following afternoon Mrs. Donelon returned home, her sons having promised to follow in a week's time. A couple of evenings after she left, Mary Delamere called again. Mark happened to be out, but Father Kevin was reading his office beside the window.

"I've come to say good-bye, Father Donelon," she said.

"Why? You are not leaving, Miss Delamere?" he asked in surprise.

"I am," she answered. "My nerves seem shattered. I think my step-uncle's death must have given me a shock. I am sincerely sorry to leave, but it is better so."

"Your health is the first consideration," said Father Kevin; "but—will nothing induce you to stay even a little longer? Oh! here is Mark. Perhaps he could persuade you."

He rose from his chair as his brother entered and quietly slipped from the room. Then taking down his hat, with a smile, and slipping his breviary into his pocket, he went out for a ramble through the woods. When he returned an hour later he was told that his brother had gone out with Miss Delamere. He went into the dining-room, where the table was laid for tea, and waited patiently.

In half-an-hour Mark returned, and they sat down at the table together. After he had tasted his tea the young priest looked up with a quizzical smile.

"I had always great faith in your powers of persuasion, Mark," he said.

Mark laughed.

"Yes; it's all right," he said. "Mary is not going away, or rather she's going down to Kerry for a change after a while, and mother will do the rest. She's promised to be my wife in the spring. I did not know how to begin to tell you, but you've guessed beforehand. How did you know?"

"My dear boy, as if your face would not have told me everything straight away. Then you know you're not the sort of fellow to go out walking with a young lady except you have something of great importance to say to and hear from her. And last, but not least, you've put no sugar in my tea."

Mark laughed again as he passed the sugar-bowl.

"I have many reasons to be grateful," he said.

"It's the fulfilling of the fifth beatitude," said his brother. "You know I like it best of all. Do you remember how I asked you while I was sick if you bore any grudge against the man who shot at me, and you said that you had told him you forgave him, as you hoped to be forgiven, even though the words cost you much. You were merciful, and obtained mercy in return, not perhaps of the sort understood in the beatitude, but mercy nevertheless. First of all, my life was spared. Secondly, your own life was saved. Thirdly, the man to whom you showed mercy obtained, as we firmly believe, eternal salvation. And now—"

"And now, this," said Mark. "Yes; God has bestowed on me mercy in great measure."

"On both of us," said the young priest. "Full measure, pressed down, and flowing over."

AGNES M. DUFFY.

Invocation.

[The following poem was written by Eamonn de Valera, Commandant, Irish Republican Army, commanding the Boland's Mill area, on Sunday, May 28th, 1916, after hearing Mass in the barrack square, Richmond Barracks. Commandant de Valera was the only Dublin Commandant who was not executed.]

O Sacred Heart! our hearts are wholly Thine,
Although we come not now before Thy shrine.
Here under heaven's blue vault we kneel and pray,
From kindred, home and friendship far away.

Thou, Sacred Heart, hast known the prison cell,
The pangs of hunger Thou hast felt as well,
The soldiers' rude assault has torn Thy frame,
Their ribald speech blasphemed Thy holy name.

The judges' sentence has been Thine like ours—
The wanton exercise of brutal powers—
The doom of death has passed upon Thy heart,
A Mother's tears were shed, as ye did part.

O, Mother, for the love of thy dear Son,
Be with us till our day of life is done:
Bring us in love and mercy to His feet,
To sing His praise and thine in accents sweet.

O Sacred Heart, grant us Thy pains to share,
By penance for our sins to make repair:
Help us in patience to embrace Thy will,
And follow in Thy footsteps to the Hill.—Amen.

EDMUND DE VALERA.

The Wisdom of a Self-made Man.

RETAILERS of wisdom deal chiefly in three brands.

The first is of the type which everybody knows without any necessity for reminders—and its vendors hand it out with the air of those who sacrifice valuables at about one-tenth of the cost price. The suppliers of the second variety dish up a series of truths which read quite cleverly but leave one just as wise as he was before, the moiety of sound common-sense being strangled in a labyrinth of word-twistings. The third species are such as you knew of all the time, only somehow you had never heard the clever truisms put so neatly. And with most people nothing leaves so deep an impression as that which awakens the sense of previous knowledge by putting plain facts in an attractive or novel garb. With no author is anyone more pleased than one of whom he can say: "Yes, I knew all that before, but it never struck me in quite the same clever way."

The "Letters from a Self-made Merchant to his Son," by G. H. Lorimer, contain much shrewdness behind their Yankee straightforwardness and bluntness. John Graham—the man who may be regarded as a dealer in wisdom of the number three variety—made his money in the pork-packing business, and his "Letters" leave on one a general impression that for success in business on a large scale much ability needs to be backed by more 'cuteness. The correspondence is supposed to have been sent to his son during the latter's early manhood—his period at college and later in the Chicago stock yards, where the firm of Graham and Co. converted dead pork and its adjuncts into dollars at a rate almost exceeding the speed limit. The first letter has some remarks on education. "Education's about the only thing lying around loose in this world, and it's about the only thing a fellow can have as much of as he's willing to haul away. Everything else is screwed down tight and the screw-driver lost." Later on he says: "Education's a good deal like eating—a fellow can't always tell which particular thing did him good, but he can usually tell which one did him harm. . . . College doesn't make fools; it develops them. A fool will turn out a fool whether he goes to college or not, though he'll probably turn out a different sort of a fool. . . . When a boy's had a good mother he's a good conscience, and when he's a good conscience he don't need to have right and wrong labelled for him. . . . You can cure a ham in dry salt and you can cure it in sweet pickle, and when you're through you've pretty good eating either way—provided you started in with a good ham. . . . Some men learn the cussedness of whiskey by having a drunken father; and some by having a good mother."

The "Letters" are nothing if not homely. In the second one we get some comments on spending. "I have noticed for the past two years that your accounts have been growing heavier, but I haven't seen any signs of your taking honours to justify the increased operating expenses; and that is bad business—a good deal like feeding his weight in corn to a scalawag steer that won't fat up. . . . The meanest man alive is the one who is generous with money that he has not had to sweat for, and the boy who is a good fellow at some one else's expense will not work up into a first-class fertilizer.

. . . . That ambition to be known as a good fellow has crowded my office with second-rate clerks, and they always will be second-rate clerks. . . . If some of them would only put in half the time thinking for the house that they give up to hatching out reasons why they ought to be allowed to overdraw their salary accounts, I couldn't keep them out of our private offices with a pole-axe—and I wouldn't want to. . . . Adam invented all the different ways in which a young man can make a fool of himself, and the college yell at the end of them is just a frill that doesn't change essentials. . . . There are times when it's safest to be lonesome."

Perhaps old Graham may be a trifle hard-headed for the tastes of many, but his point of view is so buttressed that it would take more than a vigorous attack to shift him from behind his mountain of shrewdness. When his son suggested a post-graduate course he did not jump at the notion, but pointed out the packing-house as a suitable scene for a packer's post-graduate activities. He disliked the narrowness resulting from an education derived solely from either books or life—"it's the fellow who knows enough about practice to test his theories for blow-holes that gives the world a shove ahead, and finds a fair margin of profit in shoving it." Of course, one may fairly protest that most of the views on education are utilitarian, but if the aim of learning is to fit the individual to fill his appointed niche in life most efficiently, then his views are sound, for we will get no nearer Utopia by insisting that no blacksmith be passed as fully qualified unless he can turn out passable sonnets in his hours of leisure. Yet even in pork-packing, education comes in useful. "There's a chance for everything you have learned from Latin to poetry, though we don't use much poetry here except in our street-car ads., and about the only time our products are given Latin names is when the State Board of Health condemns them." In one way, perhaps, does the old man carry his liking for grumbling just a shade too far for the tastes of those with whom popularity is a synonym for success:—"I see you've been elected president of your class. I'm glad the boys aren't down on you, but while the most popular man in his class isn't always a failure in business, being as popular as that takes a heap of time."

Mr. Graham is not an advocate of much talk. "Give fools the first and women the last word," he says. "Talk less than the other fellow, and listen more than you talk; for when a man's listening he isn't telling on himself, and he's flattering

the fellow who is. . . . There's nothing comes without calling in this world, and after you've called you've generally got to go and fetch it yourself." He disliked unpunctuality in his staff, but especially in those who were late at the end when they ought to be early, and early at the end when they ought to be late.

"Remember that when you're in the right you can afford to keep your temper, and that when you're in the wrong you can't afford to lose it," is a piece of advice that comes home to most people with a sort of quaint appeal and a feeling that they knew it all the time. "When you come across one of these gentlemen who have more oil in their composition than any two-legged animal has a right to have, you should be on the look-out for concealed deadly weapons. . . . It's good business when a fellow hasn't much behind his forehead to throw out his chest and attract attention to his shirt-front. . . . Superiority makes every man feel its equal. It is courtesy without condescension; affability without familiarity; self-sufficiency without selfishness; simplicity without side. It weighs sixteen ounces to the pound without the package, and it doesn't need a four-coloured label to make it go."

When the heir to the house of Graham showed signs of impending engagement, his father was to the fore with his views on the fair sex in general and of some of them in particular. "I don't just place Miss Dashkam," he wrote, "but if she is the daughter of old Job Dashkam I should say, on general principles, that she was a fine girl to let some other fellow marry. . . . A man can't pick his own mother, but he can pick his son's mother, and though there's no real objection to marrying a woman with a fortune, there is to marrying a fortune with a woman. . . . You can trust a woman's taste on everything except men; and it's mighty lucky that she slips up there or we'd pretty nigh all be bachelors. . . . Some people, especially very young people, don't think anything's worth believing unless it's hard to believe. . . . Of course, you want to be nice and mellow, but always remember that mellowness carried too far becomes rottenness."

The "Letters" have many capital examples which emphasise the point the writer wishes to make. He tells a story of a man who married a lady much older than himself, and was always being worried owing to casual acquaintances mistaking him for her son. After a time the good lady died, and in order to square up his matrimonial average the gentleman took unto himself a bride of youthful years, only to be worse off than ever, because everybody fancied she was his daughter. He has many wise hints on business success and its secrets, and holds that an employee of one department of a firm should make a study of every item of the firm's activities—"For the man who invests in more knowledge of the business than he has to have in order to hold his job has capital with which to buy a mortgage on a better one."

The man who vowed he never knew smoking to do anyone or anything good, except a ham, comes out with the blunt truth

that though a dirty shirt may hide a pure heart, it seldom covers a clean skin. And he expresses his belief that so long as everybody knew that appearances were deceitful there was nothing like having them deceive for instead of against us. "There are two unpardonable sins in this world—success and failure. Those who succeed can't forgive a fellow for being a failure, and those who fail can't forgive him for being a success." Naturally enough, the self-made merchant had no doubts on such a subject as self-pride, for he says: "When you're sizing up the other fellow, it's a good thing to step back from yourself and see how you look. Then add fifty per cent. to your estimate of your neighbour for virtues that you can't see, and deduct fifty per cent. from yourself for faults that you've missed in your inventory, and you'll have a pretty accurate result." Mr. Graham's view of society was that the original head of the house was a person who made his money in a shop. In Europe he made the money so long ago that the shop was forgotten wherein was made money enough to enable the family to "descend"; in New York the descendants could only pretend to have forgotten the shop—the founder of the family having died so recently; while in Chicago they couldn't even pretend to forget, for the old man was still bustling behind the counter with his apron on! In the writer's eyes heredity did not count for everything: "A man's as good as he makes himself, but no man's any good because his grandfather was."

Of course, the young hopeful of the Graham family had to become engaged, and of course the last letter has to do with matrimonial advice and felicitations—the son being about to marry the one girl whom the old man thought would make such an ideal wife for him that he feared there wasn't the slightest chance of his marrying her. "A good wife," says our mentor, "doubles a man's expenses and doubles his happiness, and that's a pretty good investment if a fellow's got the money to invest. . . . The time to size up the other side is before the engagement." Mr. Graham disliked ladies in his office—he preferred to have their husbands—"for then I usually have them both working for me. There's nothing like a woman at home to spur on a man at the office."

This "Self-made Merchant" is a solid man. He may not have anything very original to say, but he has a way of putting his practical moralising that sticks. And the old wisdom repainted is vastly better than any of the brand-new species that have yet been put on the market.

THOMAS KELLY.

October.

Shed all thy tears, sad October,
Summer, sweet sister, lies dead!
Strewn are her vanishing glories
Over her chill Autumn bed.

Veil laughing skies with thy vapours,
Strip singing woods of their gawds,
Lingering gold of the harvest
Gather from meadows and broads.

Paint out in shadowy umber
All the warm golden and green,
Leaving the countryside sombre,
Traces of where she has been.

Soon winter brings to the winding
Deathly-white sheet of the snow,
And the wild tempests as mourners
Forth to the burial go.

MOTHER ST. JEROME.

The Spirit of the Dawn.

The bloom of childhood yet upon her cheek,
Within her eyes the dew of childhood still,
She stands alone upon the stormiest peak,
And looks beyond the gathered clouds of ill.
Beyond the sun, beyond the furthest star,
Beyond the worlds that make the Milky Way,
There shines for her that splendour from afar
Which lights the soul on earth's most dreary day.
Unheeding of the storms wherein she stands,
Unfretted of the griefs of yester-years,
She stretches tender, eager, winsome hands
Towards the joys sure-coming down the spheres.
The earth beneath, shadows behind her lie.
Divine-assured she fronts the dawn-lit sky.

JESSIE ANNIE ANDERSON.

The Simple Prodigal.

(From the Irish.)

OUR prodigal had not even the grace to go into a far land to commit his sins, but, careless, chose his native city, under the very eyes of his father and all his family. As you would say, he went the pace—he betted, he gambled at cards, he got drunk, and finally he stole three hundred pounds from the bank where he was employed. It was a scandal. His brothers' feelings were outraged, his mother and sisters wept and hung their heads for shame, and no wonder. His father cursed him from the house. Then he was sent to prison, and it is here our account of him begins.

It is no new nor wonderful thing to say that while in prison the poor prodigal resolved to improve. As you would say, he was living on husks; his body was broken, he was often cold and sick. But even so, his spirit seemed to become quick as with new life, and while with tears he repented his sins and despised himself, he became happy. He resolved, we repeat, to lead a new life when he would be free again, that he would not drink, nor gamble, nor swear, nor steal; that he would always tell the truth and deceive no one. His spirit soared, and, still in bonds, he was already free.

All the hardships of prison life he bore with patience and a gentle demeanour as being good enough for a wretch such as he, a public sinner, so that even his face came to wear such an expression of serenity and peace that his jailers marvelled.

All the time our prodigal noticed no great change in himself. He was not subtle nor given to self-analysis, and while living (in God's sight) in a state approaching perfection, he thought of himself only as a reprobate, and never ceased making preparation for the good life he was going to lead out of prison.

On the day that he was set free the sun shone, though it was November, and the sky was blue. The morning air blowing on his face was mild and joyous. Pink winter clouds floated away from the sunrise. It was just a day for the release of a prisoner, and the prodigal could have shouted for joy. As it was he sank on his knees in a quiet place, thanking God, while the tears streamed down his cheeks. Then, recollecting himself, he sprang to his feet and looked round. He saw not a single friendly face. Then he remembered that he was homeless, not knowing whence his father had changed his house.

"I will go to the monks of Ailainn," he said then. "They will take me in."

These hospitable monks kept a kind of guest-house, where they put up all sorts of wayfarers without asking who they were or whence they came, a place where saints and sinners often rubbed shoulders to their souls' benefit. They lived on the outskirts of the city.

As he walked to the monastery across the awakening streets he met country carts going to or coming from the market, loads of hay or grain, cartfuls of fruit and vegetables, or now and again little knots of sheep and cattle with their drovers shouting and whistling at each other or at their flocks. He saw milk-carts rattling up and down, and smelt the fresh bread in the bakers' shops. At the church doors the people were streaming in and out from morning Masses. These joyful evidences of freedom made him almost delirious. He was in the great world once more and at liberty, the same as these others! The thought was scarcely formed in his mind when he saw how false it was. He stood still on the pavement watching the human stream. No, he was different, all different from these good people. He had once been a thief and he could never, never be on an equality with honest people again. Bowing his head, he felt cast down to the very dust.

"At least," he said, "I will never deceive them."

While in the monastery two pieces of good fortune befel him. First, his Aunt Cecilia died, God rest her, and left him three hundred and twelve pounds, and shortly afterwards he discovered where his father lived.

He hastened to the bank where he had formerly been employed.

"Here is the three hundred pounds I took from you," he said to the manager. "I have been left a legacy and I wish to make restitution."

The bank man looked at him in astonishment and with an expression of commiseration, for his face was wan with prison paleness.

"But," he said, "you do not owe this to us. Your father paid the deficit. Did you not know?"

The prodigal turned away confused, his heart filling with gratitude to his father, whose house he now sought. He found him not there but in his private office, a small room with heavy mahogany desks. On his way there the words of the prodigal of the Gospel came clearly to his mind : "Father, I am not worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants."

"Father," he said, trembling, "I have come back. I know I have been wicked and no good, that I have caused you all pain and sorrow. But I am going to turn over a new leaf. That money I—I stole, here it is, father. I have been to the bank. They told me what you had done and I want to repay you, not indeed for the sake of the money. Of course you know my Aunt Cecilia left it to me. Take it, and perhaps, father, you would let me come here and work for you and in some way make up for my bad conduct."

He ceased speaking, while his father cleared his throat. His brow was black as thunder.

"So this is what you are at now," he said. "Wanting to be taken back into the bosom of the family you have disgraced. Do you know, sir, that you shamed my grey hairs so that I hid my head, that you scandalised your brothers, that your

sister is married to a pauper of a doctor, thrown over by the judge's son, who would not marry into a family with a thief in it? Do you know, sir, that you killed your mother? Tell me this?" He shouted and banged his fist.

The poor prodigal bowed his head under these lashes, believing the worst of himself. Yet his father was far from the truth. His mother, indeed, had died while he was in prison, killed, however, not by him, her son, but by her husband's harsh treatment of them both.

"See what your precious son has done to us all," he reminded her a thousand times a day, like many a good husband, disclaiming all authorship in the black sheep. She, on the other hand, would have gone to see him in prison, she would have wept over him and hugged him to her heart, and her rejoicing at his repentance would have been greater, I say, than that of the angels in Heaven. But the great man said, "No, we disown him henceforward," and, being weak, she died and her husband reddened his eyes at the Requiem Mass and wore three inches of crape on his hat, and no one ever suspected he was Bluebeard.

"No, we had scandals enough here," now continued the prodigal's father. "Keep your money, and I'd advise you to go to America with it. You might get rich there."

Words could not be plainer. The prodigal stumbled out into the street, his heart full of pain and dismay.

"Yet I will be honest," he said. He hurried to the solicitor of his Aunt Cecilia.

"This three hundred pounds," he said. "Send it as an anonymous subscription to the Vincent de Paul Society. It is not mine; I must not keep it. Let the poor have it."

The solicitor did his bidding without commenting on it in any way. He knew he was the young man that was mixed up in the bank affair.

In his lodgings that evening the prodigal scanned the papers looking for work. His money was becoming rapidly less. He answered a few advertisements for a clerk in his clear and somewhat remarkable handwriting, and three days later had a request to present himself for an interview at a business firm. He was engaged without much preamble at eighty-seven pounds ten a year.

"On Thursday, then, you will come in," said the man of business. "Isn't that right?" turning to some senior clerks.

"That's right," one of them answered.

The prodigal stood up and hesitated.

"Before I go," he said, while the perspiration broke out on his forehead, "I do not wish to deceive you. A short time ago I stole three hundred pounds. I have been to prison for it. I have made restitution as far as I could. Only trust me now and I will serve you faithfully. I am trying to begin a new life. Make what inquiries you like about me."

Without a word the business man stood up and whispered for some time with one of the others, who went out.

"Under the circumstances," he said then, "even if what you say is true, I do not feel bound to abide by my agreement with you. I will say good morning."

While the prodigal was still within ear-shot one of the elderly men burst into a coarse laugh.

"The confidence trick," he said, leering at his companions. "He might have saved himself the trouble. The police would have told us in any case," at which they all guffawed, and the policeman behind the door was told that he might go.

Thus the prodigal went from place to place looking for work, always telling the same strange story, and everywhere people said, "Be off thief! Here policeman."

Some of these were drunkards, thieving the very bread from their children's mouths; some of them employers of sweated labour, driving men to madness and women to the streets; some of them liars, cheats and sycophants; some of them caterers for the public's leisure time, arrangers of programmes shocking to witness, even for adults, unspeakable for maidens and boys. Yet the policeman was never called on to lock them up as a danger to society; and on Sundays they entered temples of religion, where they thumped their breasts and mouthed prayers and the priests never drove them out as hypocrites and desecrators.

One night the prodigal stood shivering out in the streets. All his money was gone, all his clothing. He was half dead from cold and hunger. The north wind chilled him to the marrow. A numb despair filled his heart. He stood opposite a baker's shop looking in at the loaves. As yet he had not stolen a single morsel of food, though for three days a constant gnawing hunger possessed him. His predominant feeling, however, was despair not hunger. Who knows if he even saw the loaves now. He had fallen into a kind of abstraction.

He was roused by the first flakes of snow beginning to fall against the pane. They caressed his cheek and whitened his shoulders. He moved on and sat down on some sheltered steps.

"Here's a few coppers and a bit of bread for you," said a woman's voice in purposely softened tones. "I was looking at you outside the bread shop. God help you; you look cold."

His first instinct was to refuse the money, but seeing her face full of so much tenderness and courage he let the coins fall into his hand. She sat down beside him, eating her bread and drawing her shawl closely about her. He noticed a wedding ring on her finger.

"We are going to have a white Christmas," she said, and then they began to talk while the snow fell and whitened the city. He did not ask her why she preferred sitting on those cold steps to being in her home, or if she had a home. After a while he told her his story.

"Wisha, avic, sure no one would believe you," she said in astonishment. "Weren't you foolish to be telling them. Sure it's only God Almighty himself trusts the repentant sinner. You should have kept your money when your father

wouldn't take it, for, believe me, you'll be the poorest person yourself that you will meet in this life." She looked at him with compassion as she stood up to go, while the prodigal shook his head in protest at her advice. After she had gone a deep silence fell all about him, but he felt encouraged by his meeting with her, encouraged not to let himself die of hunger or freeze to death.

"She understood," he thought. "There may be others. I will go—where will I go? There?"

But with a shudder he turned away from the Workhouse. There it lay, with its huge ugly front, surrounded by streets of prosperous houses and mansions for many miles; there it lay, the measure of the care of the rich for the poor and of the poor for each other, lyingly called a Workhouse, in truth a lazarus-house, a death-in-life. The clocks struck midnight, and with their tolling something of hope filled the heart of the poor outcast. He bethought him of the monastery.

"I will go to the monks of Ailainn," he said for the second time. "God in Heaven understands. They are men of God, and at least they will not mock me."

O Christians, let us draw together and thank God that we are, as other men, conforming to the law, pious and God-fearing, minding our own business in this Island of Saints and Doctors, secure in houses, not walking the roads of Ireland with prodigals and tramps.

EMILY DOWLING.

Michael O'Connor's Lesson.

GREAT was the surprise in our parish when Nora Lee was seen walking out with Michael O'Connor, flaunting her new lover in the face of Harold Grant—her former sweetheart—with a want of good feeling that made some people feel very much inclined to shake her.

Yet Harold did not appear to be in the least perturbed at having been jilted. He had always a civil word for O'Connor, a fine-looking, though idle, fellow, possessing a fascinating way which girls found irresistible. Not once did Harold utter a word against Nora for the manner in which she had behaved towards him. A steady, sensible fellow, he simply went on in the usual way, taking little notice of the gossip that was spreading through the parish. It was not his custom to dwell upon disappointments. Nora had chosen another. Well, good luck to the fellow who had won her love, Harold said cheerfully.

Within a few weeks time pretty, merry, light-hearted Nora married O'Connor. Michael had saved only a small sum of money. Most of his weekly wages had hitherto been spent in pleasure. Therefore their new home was a poor one indeed.

They had two small rooms on the second floor of a dull-looking house in Mill-street. Michael earned a fair wage at his work, but he and Nora never thought of saving money. The young husband, feeling proud of his pretty wife, was quite willing that she should spend as much as she desired upon dress and finery. The only trouble seemed to be Michael's foolish jealousy towards Grant. Yet Harold, when they met in the street, would pleasantly acknowledge the time of day and pass on.

When a little son came about a year later, Nora began to look less trim than was her usual custom. The child and the housework claimed all her attention, forcing her to relinquish many of her former pleasures; while Michael gradually learned to find attraction in the public-house. For this Nora reproached him, bitterly hinting that Harold Grant would have made her a better home had she married him.

After these quarrels Michael would sulk for days, while his temper, never of the best, gradually grew violent. By the time a second child arrived—a sweet little girl with beautiful blue eyes—the parents quarrelled so frequently that their landlady threatened to give them notice to leave her house. Her other lodgers were complaining of the O'Connors' quarrelsome habits, she said indignantly.

One dull morning in November, when the winter with its cold, dreary days was approaching, Michael was dismissed from business for going to his work the worse for drink. Try as he might, he could not obtain employment elsewhere, his reputation proving entirely against him; while at their cheerless home Nora and the two little children were starving.

Kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament one damp, cold afternoon, the sound of violent sobbing interrupted my peaceful thoughts. Looking round, I beheld Nora O'Connor, very poorly dressed, seated in the last row of benches, while beside her crouched her younger child, Mollie. The baby face was drawn and hungry-looking, causing my heart to ache with grief and pity.

Murmuring a fervent prayer that Our Lord might inspire me with words of comfort, I approached Nora and asked her to come outside for a moment.

Very soon she was telling me all her troubles. In the old days before her marriage Nora and I had been good friends. Therefore I naturally felt a deep affection for the wayward girl.

"It isn't for myself that I care," she sobbed, "but it breaks my heart to see the children go hungry. We have no fire at home; that's why I came to the church. One can obtain a little warmth there, and Mollie wanted to say her prayers. I am going to ask Father Casey to give me some food. Oh, Evelyn, just imagine the shame and misery of it! What will Father Casey think?"

Truly I knew what Father Casey would do. His goodness to the poor was well known throughout our parish. In very indignant tones his housekeeper had often declared that if his reverence would insist upon giving away all he possessed, well, sure she wasn't to blame should the good father's health give way entirely.

Giving Nora what little money I could spare, I spoke a few more words of encouragement and then hurried homewards. My friend—Ruth Benson—was coming to tea; therefore I wished to have all in readiness for her reception.

A sweet, gentle, hard-working girl was Ruth. She lived in the same house as the O'Connors, renting one room over their floor. Owing to her very delicate state of health she was unable to go out to business. By sewing she managed to live. Her earnings were often scanty and uncertain, yet she appeared to be always cheerful. Loving God very dearly, she had just one ambition in life—to visit once more her native home was the greatest desire of her heart.

"Yes, Evelyn, I am still saving," she said happily, as we sat over tea together. "Please God, by next summer I shall have secured enough to take me to Cornwall. If I can only spend one month there roaming about my native village, why, I shall be as happy as a queen. All my people are now dead, but the place will be home to me just the same. Do you know, dear, the thought of my coming holiday fills me with such joy that I am almost having the pleasure of it in advance."

Knowing that I was interested in the holiday towards which Ruth was saving every spare penny, frequently denying herself things that she really required, we often had a chat upon the subject. I liked to see her pale face brighten with joyous anticipation when the visit to her home was mentioned. Poor girl! her heart was there already.

After tea I spoke of Mrs. O'Connor's troubles. Ruth's eyes filled with tears when I told her about the starving children.

"I knew they were very poor," she said, "but I had no idea that matters were so serious with them. Poor Nora! she was such a jolly girl six years ago. The children are dear little souls. I should like to help the family somehow."

"Well, prayers will do much, you know," I said earnestly. "We could make a novena for them together. Shall we begin to-night, dear?"

"Yes," she answered, thoughtfully. "Our prayers are sure to help. I'm afraid Nora and her husband are not happy together; they quarrel so frequently."

"Michael O'Connor is enough to try the patience of a saint," I said. "Why, it makes me feel quite savage to see a great strong fellow like him spending his days in idleness."

When Ruth left me that evening her face seemed radiant with some interior joy. Yet she looked so frail and delicate that a deep sadness took possession of me. Full well I realised that my little friend was already walking on the borders of another world.

Michael O'Connor remained idle as the days went by, yet he and his family managed to exist somehow. I concluded that Father Casey was doing all in his power to help them.

Occasionally, when I saw Nora I noticed that she had grown very silent, while her appearance had somewhat improved. Upon my asking if matters were better, she gave me only a vague answer, implying that her husband was still idle.

Strange! Even the children looked brighter and less hungry. Finally I sought information from Ruth, but she could tell me little.

"You know, Evelyn, I seldom associate with the people in the house," she said, "therefore I know little of their affairs. I wish Mrs. O'Connor and her husband would not quarrel so. It makes me wretched to see them so unhappy."

"Someone must be helping them," I said. "But they don't seem any the better for it. It's a sad case all round."

Three weeks later the O'Connors' affairs came to a crisis. The postman had just delivered a letter addressed to Mrs. O'Connor, when Ruth Benson overhead heard angry voices going on between husband and wife in the room below.

"Oh, dear, they're at it again," she murmured regretfully as the voices grew louder. Then, hearing the frightened cry of children, Ruth went quickly downstairs.

She was a quiet, timid girl as a rule, but the children's cry had made her suddenly bold. Pushing open the door without knocking, she walked straight into the room. Nora, her face pale and passionate, stood in the centre confronting her husband defiantly. The children crouched in a corner, both crying bitterly.

Michael O'Connor turned sharply towards the intruder.

"Who sent for you?" he demanded roughly. "We can manage our own affairs without your help, Miss Benson."

"Perhaps so," said Ruth slowly. "But hearing the little

ones crying I came to ask if you would allow them to come upstairs for an hour or so. I have no desire, Mr. O'Connor, to interfere in your affairs, but I certainly consider it very unmanly on your part to daily bully your wife as you do."

He stared at her in amazement, an expression of shame crossing his face.

"Miss Benson, he's mad—mad with jealousy of a better man than himself," Nora cried. An open letter lay on the table, and she pointed to it with trembling fingers. "That's the cause of it all," she went on; "that and the letters which came before it."

"I—I don't understand," faltered Ruth, glancing nervously at the envelope.

"For weeks past," Nora explained, while Michael stood by in sulky silence, "these letters have come to me, each accompanied by a postal order for a few shillings. I haven't the least idea who sends them, but the money has kept life in the children and me. But for it and Father Casey's help we would have starved. And he"—indicating Michael—"has made my life a misery since the letters began to come."

"Look here"—Michael strode forward—"since you've seen fit to come here unasked, Miss Benson, calling me a bully, let me tell you that my anger is not without cause. A nice man I'd be, wouldn't I, if I encouraged my wife to accept money from her old sweetheart, Harold Grant? She's been spending the money—his confounded money—on herself and the children. I've cause for anger, miss: my wife drives me crazy sometimes."

"You're mad," cried Nora. "I've never spoken to Harold Grant since the day I became engaged to you. I've been a faithful wife, Michael. There's nothing to show that the letters come from Grant. The address and the words 'From a friend' are printed in ink. Yet even had Mr. Grant been man enough to help me for the sake of the children, there could have been no great wrong in accepting the money. You wouldn't work for us, anyway."

"That's nothing to do with it," retorted Michael. "But understand this; if you cash another of those postal orders you will regret it for ever—"

"Stop, stop!" Ruth Benson held up her thin hand. "Oh, you foolish pair, to make such a scene before the children, and all for nothing. Little did I dream when I tried to render you a small service that it would lead to all this trouble. I sent you the postal orders, Mrs. O'Connor; but I desired that you should never know. Unfortunately, to make matters clear to your husband I am compelled to confess. You see, Mr. O'Connor"—turning to Michael—"you have been jealous of a poor girl. That's all."

"The money came from you, Miss Benson?" the man gasped.

"Yes." Ruth's eyes were shining. "I heard that you were hard pressed, even starving. Having saved a little money towards a holiday I thought of taking next summer, my con-

science would not allow me to keep it while fellow-creatures were close at hand wanting food. I did not wish to put you under any obligation to me, so I sent the letters anonymously, hoping that before the next week came round Mr. O'Connor would have found work. You were quite welcome to the money. But it seems that I have done more harm than good really."

Nora was sobbing quietly in a corner, while the children clung round her neck. Michael at length found voice to speak.

"I'd no idea of this, Miss Benson," he said meekly. "I'm afraid I've made a regular fool of myself all round. Nora won't forgive me in a hurry, I suppose. But thank you very much, miss, for all you've done for us—we who had no claim on you. Some day, with God's help, I'll pay that money back, Nora dear!"

His tone was very sincere. Nora looked up at him, smiling through her tears.

"Oh, Michael," she said, "what a great big fool you have been!"

"Oh, dear, but I'm sorry for it all now. You see, I hated Grant because I knew he was a better man than I. But we've got a long road to travel together, and we must try to do better in future. I'll turn over a new leaf. Miss Benson has taught me a great lesson to-day—God bless her!"

"Yes," said his wife, drying her eyes; then placing her arms around Michael's neck she whisperd: "Poor old Mike! For all our troubles I've been more to blame than you. Instead of praying for God's help, I taunted and reproached you. But we must now approach the Sacraments more frequently and try to get on better in future."

"Let me go with you sometimes," pleaded Ruth. "It would be so nice for us all to receive Holy Communion together."

Then turning to the children, she said: "Come upstairs with me, dearies. We'll have tea together, and afterwards I'll tell you some fairy tales."

They went with her gladly, for her little room was always pleasant and cosy. After a good meal they sat round the fire talking merrily, while downstairs Nora and Michael were happier together than they had been for months past.

After this Michael soon obtained employment. Moreover, every week he received the Sacraments, and the public-house saw none of his money. Ruth's generous conduct was not without its good effect on O'Connor. In a short time the family moved from the lodging-house to a neat little cottage near the church. So pretty and pleasant became their home that Nora, who had formerly dreaded visitors, now welcomed them with delight. Father Casey, Ruth Benson and myself could always rely upon receiving a warm reception whenever we went to Rose Cottage.

When the summer came I asked Ruth if she were going for her long-looked-for holiday. I knew nothing of the above facts then; Nora told me of them afterwards. Smiling very

happily, my friend answered that she had decided to wait another year. This somewhat surprised me, but I made no further remark upon the subject.

Michael, through his perseverance, was able to return all the money owing to Ruth. But the following winter proved to be a very severe time for the delicate. After a short illness—through which she was nursed most devotedly by Nora—Ruth Benson went *home*, but not to Cornwall. As the O'Connors and I followed her to the grave, our hearts were filled with a great love and reverence for the little seamstress. For her task upon earth completed, she had responded gladly to the call of her Lord, going to Him as one who loved Him all too well to fear His judgment.

CECILIA ROCHE.

In Thanksgiving, Etc.

M. M. (Mallow) sends us two-and-sixpence towards the expenses of the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel, in thanksgiving for favours received through his intercession.

Lucy Truim (?) sends two-and-sixpence towards expenses of the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel, for a special intention.

"Brian" sends two-and-sixpence for the same object, in thanksgiving for favours received through Blessed Gabriel's intercession.

Sr. M. A. J. (Monaghan) sends five shillings towards the expenses of the Cause of Gemma Galgani and Blessed Gabriel.

T. Madden sends three shillings towards the Cause of Beatification of Gemma Galgani.

Sister Philomena (Roscommon) forwards a number of donations from clients of Blessed Gabriel towards the expenses of his Canonization: a lady who asks for recovery of health through his intercession, four shillings: a girl asking a favour, two-and-sixpence: for a favour asked, one shilling: in thanksgiving for a favour received, one-and-sixpence: an invalid who begs through his intercession health to follow her vocation, five shillings.

A Dublin Client of Blessed Gabriel sends two-and-sixpence towards the expenses of his Canonization.

Per Very Rev. Father Rector (Mount Argus), ten shillings towards the expenses of the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel.

Anonymous sends six shillings towards the expenses of the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel.

O. H. M. sends two-and-sixpence towards the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel and a shilling towards the Cause of the Little Flower, in thanksgiving for favours received through their intercession.

The Rev. Dom A. M. O'Sullivan has sent us towards the expenses of the Cause of Gemma Galgani and for another purpose £6 5s., which we have already forwarded to Rome.

A. B. writes: "In fulfilment of a promise, I, a National teacher, desire to publicly acknowledge, with sincere thanks, two good reports of school, and two successes with distinctions of own children at the recent Intermediate examinations. Thanks again to the Sacred Heart and Gemma Galgani."

Contributions towards the expenses of the Causes of Blessed Gabriel and Gemma Galgani and information of favours received through their intercession will be gratefully acknowledged in these pages and duly forwarded to the Postulator at Rome.



A Literary Circle for Young Readers of "The Cross."

Conducted by FRANCIS.

RULES OF THE GUILD:

- I. *The Guild of Blessed Gabriel is a literary circle open to boys and girls under 18 years of age.*
 - II. *The members will be expected to spread devotion to Blessed Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, by practising the virtues of purity, charity and truth; and by living lives worthy of him who is to be their model and guide.*
 - III. *They will at all times observe the conditions under which the competitions will be held.*
 - IV. *They will endeavour to bring as many new members as they can into the Guild of Blessed Gabriel.*
-

HERE we are back at work, holidays all over and done with, lessons and school work, and, for some of my senior members, business life facing us day by day, and gradually extending, becoming more and more interesting according as our aptitude and progress enable us to overcome difficulties and master the necessary details. Will my children smile at an old man's confession if I tell them that I often wish I could get right in amongst them as a schoolboy of 15 or so (without perhaps relinquishing the experience that has taught me to appreciate youth's advantages), to join in their studies, their works, and their pastimes, and share in their hopes and joys and sorrows? It gives me intense joy to learn from time to time of the plans for the future of the young people whose friendship I have gained in these pages, although frequently these being mentioned to me in confidence, cannot be here discussed. There is so much that needs to be done by men and women in every walk of life here in Ireland for Faith and Fatherland that I should like to win the friendship and confidence of every boy and girl in the land, if that were possible, and draw them together to work shoulder to shoulder in the years to come in whatever sphere of life it shall please our Heavenly Father to place them, true men and women whose chief aim in life is "Do chun gloire De agus onora na hEireann"—for the glory of God and the honour of Ireland. I am proud of the fact that our Guild is helping in no small degree, and will, with the assistance of our beloved Patron, continue to help in forming friendships between our members and directing and encouraging their efforts towards this end.

In this month, dedicated to the beautiful devotion of the Holy Rosary, so beloved of Irish Catholics, we should pray with increased fervour that the Virgin Mother of God may obtain from her Divine Son the blessing of peace among Christian nations and security and prosperity for our own dear

country. I have lately heard that a lady who is closely related to one of the men imprisoned in connection with the recent insurrection is organising a Rosary crusade to ask our Blessed Lady's assistance in obtaining the release of all these prisoners. This is a grand movement, and I hope that each member of the Guild of Blessed Gabriel will every day during this month of October offer up the Rosary, or at least a portion of it, for that intention. The continued imprisonment of these men, many of whom have wives and little children dependent on them, is a very great hardship, and as the insufficient food allowed most of them must be supplemented from home, and the dependents of those who were left unprovided for are being assisted by funds collected for the purpose, a further strain is put on the Irish people, who are, we know, already too heavily burdened. We can do nothing to help in this matter except by prayer, and our prayers we should give, generously and with confidence, in the intercession of the Mother of God.

What a lucky old man I am to have such faithful friends! The "ex-members" continue to send me cheery messages each month. **Chrissie Burke** says: "Really, if the new members come flocking into the Guild as at

present, I fear you will have to work overtime to get through all the correspondence," and she wants our Dublin members to hustle (to use an Americanism) lest "Historic Drogheda" should leave our poor old Dublin in the background, not to mention Cork. I think I must add a word to Chrissie's exhortation to both Dublin and Cork. I have some promising members in both cities, from whom I expected contributions this month. Now, then, girls and (most particularly) boys, please note that I have no objection to "overtime" pleasantly occupied. Chrissie asks me to thank Mollie Joyce for her kind wishes, which are reciprocated, and she adds an appreciation of Mollie's own charming essays. **Proinsias Mac Tighernain** has rejoiced my heart by sending a long letter in Irish and promising to do so again whenever possible. Ta se tuirseach, traochta den Bheurla, agus ni h-aon ionguadh san. However, each succeeding year increases the number of Irish speakers in Dublin, buidheachas le Dia, and a person anxious to speak Irish should have no difficulty now in finding companions of the same spirit. Beidh me ag guidhe ar do shon, a Phroinsias, gan aon amhras. Go geuirfidh Dia ar do leas tu, a mhic. **Mary Rennie**, our prize-winner of last month, in a dear little letter, introduces her sister Nellie to the Guild "as a thanks-offering, and asks me to convey her thanks to the members for their prayers, to which she attributes her success in a recent examination; and **Nellie Rennie** writes asking for admission and promising to do all in her power to spread devotion to our dear Patron among her school companions. I give you a hearty welcome, Nellie, and offer the same to **Katie Doyle**, of Howth, who is the fifth member introduced by **Lizzie Malone**, and who in her turn brings along five new members, namely, **Lizzie Rickard**, **Annie Doyle**, **Mollie Keegan**, **Bessie Reid**, and **May Doyle**. Welcome to each of the five. Their letters have come to hand, and also letters from **Sarah Vaughan** and **Edward Malone**, who did not write last month, as it was late when they got "The Cross." And I have still another member from Howth to welcome in the person of **Annie Boyle**, who comes of her own accord and promises to bring other members. **May Prendergast** has also been recruiting and introduces **Winnie Andrews**, who is ten years old, and hopes to win some prizes. Judging by her letter, I should say the hope is likely to be fulfilled. **James Henry** is at business now and has not much time; nevertheless, he hopes to compete next month, and I hope to hear from him again then. **Nellie Hall**, notwithstanding the fact that she is preparing for a Catechism examination, sends a long letter describing a pleasant day spent during her holidays. And another old friend, **Una Ni Chunnegain**, sends a nice letter introducing four more new members, viz.: **Josie O'Callaghan**, **May Clegg**, **Gertie O'Regan**, and **Marie Lawlor**, from whom I expect to receive letters in due course.

A pretty badge bearing the portrait of our Patron, Blessed Gabriel, is awarded to the member who brings five new recruits into the Guild. This month two badges go to Howth, one to **Lizzie Malone**, No. 2, Sea View Terrace, and the other to **Katie Doyle**, 72 St. Peter's Terrace.

All newcomers will please write a personal note to **Francis**, apart from their competition papers, asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild. And now for a very humiliating confession, with which I fear some of my

young friends will be disappointed. The entries in the competition set to seniors last month are not up to standard, and I have reluctantly decided not to award a prize in this section. The subject was perhaps rather difficult, and I think now that it was too much to expect poetry from members so soon after the holidays; at all events, I have not mentioned the competitors, and if they or any of them make a further effort later on I can on request repeat the competitions. And I may say that I have two or three members who I know have the gift of poetry, but who did not compete this time. But we shall let it rest at that.

In the junior competitions the prize winner is **Josephine Dunne**, 5 St. Andrew Street, Dublin. The drawings coming **Members Under 12.** next in order of merit were made by **Patrick Henry, May Prendergast**, and **Winnie Andrew.**

OUR NEXT COMPETITION.

All boys and girls look forward with delight to Hallow Eve, and I am sure many of my members have stories to tell about that festival and the customs that go to make it interesting.

I.—For Members over 12 and under 18 years of age.

A handsome book prize is offered for the best essay on "Hallow Eve and the Customs associated with it in Ireland."

II.—For Members under 12 years of age.

A handsome book prize is offered for the best letter telling of "Hallow Eve at Home: How we Spend it."

All competition papers must be certified by some responsible person as being the unaided work of the competitor. They must have attached to them the coupon which will be found in this issue (one coupon will be sufficient for all the members of a family), and must be written on **one side only** of the paper. They must be sent so as to reach the Office of "**The Cross**" not later than October 14th. All letters to be addressed: **Francis, c/o "The Cross," St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin.**